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DOCUMENTS.

PROTEVANGELIUM IACOBI.

[FROM AN ARMENIAN MANUSCRIPT IN THE LIBRARY OF THE MECHITARISTS
IN VENICE.]

ARMENIAN TITLE :—CONCERNING THE HOLY VIRGIN MARIAM, WHO
WAS IN THE HOUSE OF HER FATHER. THE WHICH
WAS RELATED BY ST. JAMES, THE
BROTHER OF THE LORD.

- Tisch. ed.* But the husband Joachim,¹ when he went forth from his home, took his
1, 4. flocks and his shepherds, and departed into the wilderness, and there
pitched his tent. And he fell to praying for thirty days and thirty
nights, crying and weeping (living) on bread and water only; (and)
he sat down and besought God with sorrowful soul and spake thus :
Remember me, Lord, according to thy mercifulness and righteous-
ness; and work unto me a sign of thy loving kindness, as thou did'st
1, 3. unto our forefather Abraham. For in the season of his old age thou
gavest to him seed of blessing, a son of promise, Isaak his mother's
only son, and heir of consolation to his nation. Even so with tears
he besought God with sorrowful soul, asking for pity from the Lord.
And he said : I will not go down hence, I will not eat nor will I drink
until the Lord look upon me and have pity on his servant. And
when he had finished his forty days' fast, the angel of the Lord came
and stood before Joachim and said to him : Joachim, the Lord hath
IV, 2. heard thy supplication and hath fulfilled thy desire. Behold, thy
wife shall conceive and shall bear to thee seed of thy blessing, and
her name shall be great, and all nations shall bless her. Arise, take
the offering which thou did'st promise to make, and thou shalt take
it into the temple of holiness and shalt fulfill thy vow there. For,
behold, I will go before thee on this night and will intimate to the
high priest to accept sacrifices from thy hands. And having said
this the archangel left him; but Joachim arose quickly full of joy,
and went with his many flocks and offerings.
And in the same vision the angel of the Lord appeared to the high
priest Eliazar and said to him : Behold, Joachim cometh unto thee
with offerings. Thou shalt accept his sacrifices with holiness and
lawfully as is right. For the Lord hath listened to his supplication
and hath fulfilled his desire. And the high priest awoke from his
sleep, and rose up and thanked the Lord and said : Blessed be the
Lord God of Israel, who despiseth not his servants who ask of him.
IV, 2. And then the angel of the Lord appeared a second time to Anna

¹ The beginning of the piece is missing in the Arm. MS. In the margin
are noted the corresponding chapters and sections of Tischendorf's text.

and said to her: Lo, thy husband cometh; arise, go forth to meet him, and receive him with joy. But Anna arose and dressed herself in her wedding garb, and ran to meet him. And when she saw her husband, she bowed low to him with joy, and fell on his neck. But Joachim said to her: All hail to thee, Anna, and good tidings; for the Lord God hath had compassion on me and hath blessed me, and hath promised to give us seed of blessing. And Anna said to Joachim: Thy good tidings return unto thee, for me also hath the Lord enjoined to give (them) as thou sayest. Anna was rejoiced and said: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who hath not despised our supplications, and (hath) not (withheld) his compassion from us. And straightway Joachim bade summon his friends and neighbors; and he entertained them with great cheer: they ate and drank and were merry. And having thanked God, they departed each to his own home; and raising their voices they glorified God.

Tisch. ed.

IV, 4.

CHAPTER II.—*About the birth of the holy virgin Mariam, which was in the house of her father.*

And on the morrow Joachim arose and called the shepherds and said to them: Bring ye ten lambs. White shall be² this offering for the great temple of my God, and twelve calves. This shall be for the priests, the scribes and the ministrants, who are servitors of the church. And goats³ a hundred. This shall be for all the congregation of Israel. And when Joachim had taken his offerings and brought them into the temple of the Lord, and had saluted the priests and all the congregation, he brought forward and set down before them his sacrifices. And they beheld him and were glad, and called him blessed; for that the Lord was pleased to receive offerings of holiness from his hands. The multitude of men that were there wondered and said: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who hath fulfilled the desire of thine heart. Go in peace into thy house; and the Lord shall be with you forever, and shall give thee good seed and a holy offspring from the fruit of thy loins. And Joachim saluted the priests who were there, and he rose up and entered the temple; and he fell to praying and gave thanks to the Lord and said: O Lord God of Israel, of our fathers; as thou hast heard thy servant, and hast magnified thy mercy, so now I pray thee, O Lord. If thou shalt give to me seed, male or female, I will give it to thee, Lord, in thy temple here to be thy minister all the days of its life. And Joachim thus spake, and he arose and departed in joy unto his home.

IV, 3.

When three months had passed, the child leapt in its mother's womb; and Anna was right glad and rejoiced, and said: The Lord liveth. Whether the seed of blessing be for me male or female, I will give it unto the temple of holiness all the time of its life. And Anna went with child for 180 days, which is six months. Then Joachim went up with his offerings away unto the temple of holiness, and pre-

IV, 1.

²The Arm. = *πρόβατα δέκα λευκά ἔσται τοῦτο*. I suspect that the verb is singular in the Armenian because it is made directly or indirectly from a Greek text where a plural neuter has a singular verb.

³The meaning of the Arm. word which I render "goats" is not certain.

- Tisch. ed.* sented before the priest the blood sacrifices which he had promised to make in all fulfillment at the end of the year. And when they had dragged the (victims of the) holocaust to the altar and slain them, in the shedding of their blood they saw that there was no blemish in them, and they were right glad and praised God. But Joachim after presenting his offerings took a single lamb and having presented it slew it there upon the altar. And they all saw on a sudden as it were white milk gushing out of its veins instead of blood. And the priests and all the congregation saw this and marveled and were agape; because never before had such a sign been manifested as there was in the case of this slaying. The high priest Eliazar said to Joachim: Tell us in whose name thou hast presented this offering, who hast brought lambs to be slain later on upon the altar. Joachim said: The first sacrifice I had vowed to make to my
- P. 6. Lord in fulfillment of my first vow. But this last lamb is in the name of my seed. Having taken counsel I was to sacrifice it in behalf of that (my seed). The high priest said: Thou dost see this sign, which the Lord hath shewn thee in the name of thy seed. The high priest said: The milk which gushed out just now from its veins is in the name of thy seed. For that which is born in the womb of its mother is female incorruptible and holy virgin. But the virgin conceiving without man giveth birth to a male child, who becometh a great ruler and king of Israel. And when all who stood there heard this, they marveled greatly. But Joachim departed in silence unto his home, and told to Anna his wife about the wonders which had taken place. And they gave thanks to God and were glad, and said to the Lord: Thy will be done.
- V, 2. But when the pregnancy of Anna was advanced 210 days, which is seven months, forthwith in the seventh hour Anna bore her holy child, on the completion of the twenty-first (day of) the month, which is September eighth. The first day she asked the midwife: What have I borne? And she answered: Thou hast borne a female child, but very beautiful, fair to behold, and comely, pure without any stain. Anna said: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who hath hearkened unto the prayers of his servants, and hath magnified his compassion and his dealings with us; and we have been made to rejoice. Now is my heart established in the Lord, and my hope raised on high in God my Saviour.
- P. 7; V, 2. When the child was three days old, the midwife ordered it to be washed, and to be placed in the upper chamber with honor. And they brought it before her, and she gave it the breast and suckled it and gave it to drink of her milk; and out of tenderness called her name Mary.⁴ And day by day she grew and increased; and she would toss her in merriness in her arms. Thus then, her parents brought her up with fostering care.
- When Mary was forty days old, her parents took her with great honor and many offerings; and brought her to the temple of the
- VI, 1. Lord according to the rule of their tradition. And the child Mary increased and grew day by day. But when she was six months old, her mother let her make her first essay at walking; and when she had taken three steps, she turned round and going back threw her-

⁴In the original "Mariam."

self in her mother's lap; but her mother lifted her up upon her arms and caressing her, said: "Mary, mother of holy virgins, thou goodly root of trees, branch and blossom. From thee glances forth the morning star of light like to the moon, than stars more brilliant, brighter than the splendor of the sun, light of day, effulgence of the dawn ethereal." These and other words spake Anna and embraced the holy child and said: The Lord liveth, that thy feet shall not tread the ground until thou art brought into the temple of holiness. And Joachim said: Yea, well hast thou spoken. And the child abode in the house of her father till she was three years old. Amen. Tisch. ed.

CHAPTER III.—*Concerning the holy virgin Mary's upbringing, which was in the Temple of Holiness for twelve years.*

Joachim said unto Anna: The days of the child with us are completed. Do thou bid summon all the daughters of the Hebrews, the virgins devoted to God; and let them take each a lamp in their hands, and bear the child with honor and holiness into the temple of God as is even right. And they bore and set her down on the third step of the tabernacle, and the Lord God gave her grace and wisdom. VII, 2.
And an angel of God came down from heaven and waited on her at table, and she was fed by the angels of life. And every day she listened to the sound of the tongue and the songs of angels there in the tabernacle. VII, 3.
And Mary was three years old, when her parents gave her unto the temple; and she abode there twelve years, and in one year died her parents. And Mary felt much sorrow for her father and mother, and put on mourning for thirty days. VIII, 1.
But Mary stayed in the temple and was brought up there and grew after the manner of women, like the other daughters of the Hebrews, who were with her until she was fifteen years old. In that same year the high priest Eliazar died,⁵ and the children of Israel mourned for him and lamented thirty days. Then after that year there was a gathering of the priests and of the elders and of the others, to take counsel and appoint a high priest of the temple and cast lots. And the lot fell upon Zachariah, son of Barachiah. And the priests all elected him, and appointed him minister of the holy altar. Now Anna and Elizabeth were kinswomen of one another, and they were both barren, and they had no offspring. And after that Anna conceived, and that thirteen years had passed by since the birth of Mariam, until Zachariah became high priest of the temple. And it was in the priesthood of Zachariah, and his wife likewise was barren like Anna. After that the priests took counsel and all the congregation, and said among themselves: It hath been untoward, and we understood not the deed we wrought. Wherefore did we appoint him high priest in the temple? for he hath sins and his wife is barren and hath not the seed of blessing. Then one of them, named Levi, said to the priests: If ye think him worthy (? unworthy), by your command I will tell him this. The priests answered: Only intimate unto him what we say in secret, that he may know this action, and tell thou it to no one. The priest answered: Yea, I will tell him this, and none else. And it came to pass one day at the

⁵The details which follow about Zachariah are absent from the Greek protevangel and seem to belong to some apocryph about Zachariah, so far as they are not taken from Luke's gospel.

Tisch. ed. ending of the time of prayer, the priest came in secret by and revealed to him that which had been said. And when Zachariah heard this, he was much afflicted, and considered in himself saying: What shall I do, or what answer shall I make? For in myself I am not conscious of having done any wrong. And if they hate me for nothing, when I am sinless, how shall the Lord himself search out that alone? But if I dismiss my wife without her being in any way guilty as a reason, that is a heavy sin unto me. If they think that I have any guilt, how shall I be acquitted? But if I silently retire from the service of the holy altar and from the high priesthood, that is very hard for me. What then is to become of me? For I am very perplexed and my heart is grieved. While he was thus considering all that and was deep in thought, the hour of the service of prayer arrived, that he should cast incense before the Lord. And he stood there in the temple near to the holy altar of God, and shed his tears before the tabernacle, and prayed thus: Lord God of our fathers, God of Israel, look in thy pity on thy servant, who stand ashamed before thy majesty, and supplicate thy benevolent and kindly will. Scorn not thy servant; but, if thou think me worthy to minister to thy holy altar, shew unto me thy loving kindness, O thou who alone art merciful and all-powerful; and to thee be glory for ever. Amen.

And this did the high priest Zachariah say, and stood on the right hand of the holy altar, and prostrated himself humbly before the Lord; when lo! an angel of God appeared unto him in the tabernacle and said to him: Fear not, Zachariah, for thy prayer is heard, and thy desires are come before God. Behold, thy wife Elizabeth shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called John. Saith Zachariah: How shall I know that thing, for I am old and my wife is advanced in her days? How shall that be unto me? Saith the angel: For as much as thou heardest me not and didst not believe my words, lo! thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be able to speak until the day in which it shall be unto thee. And forthwith Zachariah swooned in the temple, and he fell down silently before the altar and lamenting beat his breast, and wept bitterly. But the priests and the rest of the multitude who were there were lost in wonder at his tarrying in the temple. And the priests entered and found him in a swoon, and he could not speak. But with his hand only he made a sign. But after the feast was passed by of the tabernacles of holiness on the fifteenth of the month of Tisri, which is October the second, there was the end of all the chief of the feasts. And on the twenty-second of Tisri, which is October the ninth, Elizabeth conceived. And in the month Thamul, on the sixteenth, which is June the fifth, was the birth of John the Baptist. Glory unto Christ. Amen.

CHAPTER IV.—*Concerning the holy virgin Mariam, the giving of her to Joseph unto wife according to the rule of their tradition, for him to keep the virgin's purity with due care; and about the devoting of her by faith to the Lord.*

- VIII, 2. When the days of the holy virgin Mariam in the temple were completed, and she was fifteen years old, the priests held a council among themselves and said: What shall we do with Mariam, for her parents

are dead; and they intrusted her to us in purity in the temple here? *Tisch. ed.*
and she is quite grown up in stature after the manner of women.
We must not keep her in our midst, lest she unexpectedly ruin the temple of God.

The priests said among themselves: What then shall we do with her? And one of them said, a priest whose name was Behezi: And there are many daughters of the Hebrews here in the temple along with her. Let us proceed to ask the high priest Zachariah, and whatsoever he wishes, let us do it. They answered with one accord: Good. Then the priest Behezi came forward and said to Zachariah: Thou art high priest fully ordained unto service of the holy altar; and there are here women of the Hebrews, who have devoted themselves to God. Enter into the holy of holies and pray for them. And whatsoever the Lord revealeth, according to his pleasure, that let us do. And forthwith the high priest Zachariah rose up, and took the twelve stones, and entered into the holy of holies, and prayed for them. And as he cast the incense before the Lord, lo! an angel of God came and stood by the altar of the tabernacle and said to Zachariah: Depart outside the door of the temple, and bid summon the eleven daughters of the Hebrews; and Mary bring thou hither with them, who is of the tribe of Judah and of the stock of David. And bid summon all the unwedded men in the city hither, and let them bring each one a tablet; and thou shalt lay (them) in the tabernacle of testimony and shalt write their names on the tablets, and shalt pray. And whomever of them the Lord signifies, his wife shall she become. And the high priest Zachariah went forth out of the temple and bade it be proclaimed to all the city to this effect: Whosoever are unmarried, let them quickly come hither. And when all heard it, they gathered all together there, and had with them tablets each one in his hand. And the old man Joseph having heard this, at once threw away his adze, and took a tablet in his hand and hastened off and came. And the high priest took the tablets in his hands and entering the temple prayed concerning them. For it was the rule of the tribes of Israel, that from the tribe of Judah (and) from the stock of David they should give them continually their daughters for them to keep in the temple in purity and righteousness during twelve years, to await and abide the coming of God's command; that the Word be made flesh of a stainless and untouched holy virgin, and appearing in the flesh like one of mankind walk up and down the earth. This had been sealed in writing and preserved by the tribe of Israel, because of the tradition of their fathers there in the temple. But if there came not unto them any sign or intimation from the Holy Spirit, they took and gave them in marriage. Likewise also these, who were daughters twelve of the tribe of Judah and stock of David, and the virgin Mariam with them, who is chief above all virgins.

These were gathered there and stood all together in union, and the lot was cast over the bachelors (to decide) to which of them should fall a wife.

Now when the high priest Zachariah had taken from the temple the several tablets, he gave to the bachelors, and they saw written the writing of the names of the virgins on the tablet, to whom (each) should fall as wife. And when the high priest gave the tablets, no

IX, 1.

Tisch. ed. sign came to pass unto them, but only the writing of the names which was written. But the last tablet (he gave) to Joseph, on which was written the name of the holy virgin Mariam. And lo! a dove issued out of the tablet and rested on the head of Joseph. Said the high priest unto Joseph: Thou art the portion that falls to the virgin Mariam. Take her, let her be kept to thee unto wife; for she has been allotted in purity to thee unto wedlock of wifehood, as also the other virgins to their several bachelors.

IX, 2. But the old man Joseph when he heard this resisted and said: I pray you, priests and people, who are of one accord in the holiness of this temple, put ye not force upon me before you all. How shall I do all this which ye say, for I have many kinsfolk. A son I have and a loved one, and I am greatly put to shame by them. Force me not. The priests and all the people answered: Hear us and submit to the will of God, and be not so contrary and opposed; for it is not the law for anyone to do as thou doest. Said Joseph: I am very old, and am come nigh to death. And wherefore is all this matter unto me, which ye bid my old age perform, the which is not right. The high priest answered: Hear us, no shame or grief whatever shall come upon thee from anyone, but from all blessing and riches and glory. Said Joseph: Ye speak fairly, but that she cometh to me as a daughter and not as a wife, and that all see and hear this, is for the sons of Israel to make mock of me. Said the high priest: We know thee for a just and good soul and a lover of God. And she is pure and neglected of her parents, and they committed her unto us under oath into this temple. And we by the command of the priests and of all the congregation bear witness that by law the virgin Mariam hath fallen to thy lot. Take her by our pleasure and blessing and lead her away and keep her in purity and with respect. As is the law and tradition of our holy forefathers, until the time cometh for thee to receive the crown of blessing along with the other virgins and with the bachelors. Joseph said: Have mercy on my old age and white hair, and force me not to perform what I have no inclination for, to keep her in security and readiness as is right. For she is a virgin and is come unto her husband after the manner of women. Or else how is it right for me to take her to wife? For 'tis a sin. The high priest answered: If thou hadst not been prompt and willing of speech, who constrained thee? Wherefore didst thou come hither with the bachelors, and draw lots according to the law of holiness, and receive in the temple of the Lord the sign of blessing, which was vouchsafed to thee by God unto even partnership?

Joseph answered: I understood not earlier, and pondering it I could not understand this saying, which was to be or (how) such a matter was to befall me. For unto me now is the season of death and not to my old age and white hair . . . ⁶life without blemish. Said the high priest; Fear the Lord and resist not his commands. Remember what God did unto Kora and Dathan and Abiram;⁷ how the earth was cloven asunder and swallowed them up, because of the opposition which they made. And now do thou fear the

⁶ There is a lacuna here in the text.

⁷ Spelt Korh, dadan, and Abiron.

same from God, lest suddenly and unawares some evil befall thee. When Joseph heard this, he bowed his head and did obeisance to the priests and to all the congregation. And he took Mariam out of the temple and went forth and led her into his house unto the city of Nazareth. And Joseph said to Mariam: Thou girl, hear me what I shall say unto thee now. Give ear and mark it well. Behold I leave thee here in my house, even as thou dost see, and for all the necessities of thy body I will here make provision. And do thou sit here in the place of honor, as I told thee, and be careful and prepared in thyself. Go not anywhere vainly, and let no one enter in unto thee to come in and go forth until I return and come to thee, as the Lord shall desire. The God of our fathers, the God of Israel be with thee forever.

Tisch. ed.

IX, 3.

And when he had thus spoken, Joseph arose and went his way to his work of carpentering. And it came to pass after a few days, they held a council among themselves and said: Come let us make a vail of the temple, that on the day of the great festival it appear when the congregation is gathered together, and (that) the service of the holy tabernacle be thus adorned. Said the priests: Ye say well. Then the high priest bade summonse the wives and virgins who were dedicated to God in the temple from the tribe of Judah and family of David. And when the twelve virgins were come, the high priest Zachariah remembered the holy virgin Mary that she was of the family and they went and called her. And when Mary came the high priest said: Cast lots to see who shall weave the gold-blue, the byssus and the purple, the red and the hyacinth. And when they had cast lots, as the lot of Mariam came out the purple and the red. And she took it silently and went to her home, and she began first to weave the red. And at the same time she took her pitcher and went to the fountain to bring water.

X, 1.

XI, 1.

CHAPTER V.—*About the voice of good tidings of the Angel, who foretold the pregnancy of the holy virgin Mariam.*

In that hour there came to her a voice from the angel saying unto her: Be thou glad, O virgin Mary. And on a sudden Mary was startled and much afraid, and looked this way and that and saw no one. And pondering whence the voice came to her and taking up her pitcher she abruptly fled and shutting the door sealed it securely. And she herself went silently and sat in the corner of the house. But in her mind she was amazed and wondered and said: What is this greeting which was given to me? Who is there that knew me or knew before who I am, or whom have I anywhere seen to address and speak such words unto me? And as she thought over all this she was afraid and trembled. And she rose up and prayed and said: Lord God of our fathers, God of Israel, look in thy mercy upon me and incline thine ear unto my prayers and to the supplications of my heart; and hear thy humble maidservant, who trusting in thee and fleeing to thee cry out. Lead me not into temptation of the enemy, nor into the toils of the traducer, but save me from the snare and deceit of the hunter. For in thee is my trust, and mayest thou, my Lord and God, keep my maidenhood inviolate. And when Mary had thus spoken she wept and gave

XI, 1.

Tisch. ed. thanks to the Lord. And she abode there three hours and took in her hand and wove the red.

XI, 2. And behold an angel of the Lord came and entered in unto her through the closed doors, appearing to her without body as if with bodily appearance, and said: Be thou glad, Mary, virgin intact, handmaiden of the Lord. And Mary suddenly beheld the angel and was afraid of the same and being full of terror could not flee away. And the angel said unto her: Fear not, Mary, thou blessed among women. I am the angel Gabriel who was sent from God to say unto thee this: Behold thou shalt conceive and bear a Son to the Father on high. And he shall be a great king over all the earth. And Mary said: What speakest thou and what sayest, tell me. Said the angel: Whatsoever I have told thee, thou hast heard from me. Receive the summons of my oracle, which I foretell unto thee, and do thou be glad.

Mary said: A new and strange thing is this which I hear from thee, and I am agape with awe. Shall I conceive and bear like any other woman? How is this unto me, who know not a man?

The angel answered: O holy virgin Mariam, think not so, but understand this matter. What thou sayest may not be so. For not from flesh, nor from blood, nor from the will of man, but from the power of grace of the Holy Spirit is that which shall dwell in thee and be with thee, even as he shall himself will. Mary said: Hard and strange seemeth to me the word which thou speakest, and I cannot bear nor endure to be under the words thou hast spoken. And I marvel at thy saying it; for the thought is unseasonable, and such a miraculous event unlikely, as thou tellest me of. And as I listen to thee my soul is scared and trembles, and my mind reels, and is perplexed, and I know not what answer to make unto such a message. The angel said: Why is thy soul afraid and scared? The holy virgin said: How then shall I hearken unto thee, or believe in thy words; since such a thing as this was never heard of by man, nor is that which thou sayest to be comprehended . . .

The angel said: The words I have uttered I speak truly to thee and with full assurance and not vainly; nor have I told thee aught out of my own imagining, but only that which I heard from the Lord. And I was sent by God to give thee this tidings and to announce them to thee. Yet thou dost reckon my words to be false. Fear thou the Lord and hear me.

The holy virgin Mary said: 'Tis not that I account thy words vain, but I am filled with wonder. For heaven and earth cannot contain or envelop the deity, nor could all the heavenly orders of the incorporeal hosts made of spirit and of fire look upon and behold his glory. How then shall I be able to bear and support the infinite fire and afford him a dwelling in my body? or how can I support and carry him in my bosom and with my hand handle him? This thou sayest is impossible and the thought beyond reach and the reality marvelous; and 'tis beyond all human ken to inquire into and understand him. Surely 'tis with deceptive words thou wouldst convince my mind? Is it not so?

The angel said: O blessed holy virgin, hearken unto what I shall tell thee. Moses in the mountain, how did he become an eyewitness of God? And how did the bush flame with fire and not burn

him? How did Abraham's tent admit him in fleshly form and yet the fire not touch them? And how, when he wrestled with Jacob, did he converse with him? And so with many other patriarchs and prophets—how did he manifest himself to them so that according to their piety they saw him? So do thou not fear; only have faith and be silent about all I shall tell thee now. *Tisch. ed.*

Mary said: How shall this be unto me which thou sayest? or how shall I know his advent, and on what day it is or in what hour? Tell me this.

The angel said: Speak not thus of that which thou knowest not; nor be unbelieving as touching what thou dost not understand. But incline thine ear, and trust me in that which I shall say unto thee. Mary said: 'Tis not from distrust I speak, nor from weak assurance. But I would fain ask and understand the truth—how this shall be unto me, and in what hour it shall be, in order that I may be truly prepared.

The angel said: His advent is at all times prepared, and in entering and dwelling in thy womb he doth hallow and cleanse all the tenement of thy body, and it shall become his temple.

Mary said: How shall this be unto me, for I know not a man?

The angel said: The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee, and the Word God is made flesh from (or in) thee; and thou shalt bear a Son to the Father on high; yet spotless and inviolate shall abide thy virginity. Mary said: And how can a woman in her virginity bear a child without a man?

The angel said: What thou sayest is not so. Nor is thy offspring born after the fleshly affection of actual desire, nor is thy pregnancy result of wedlock and actual connection. But holy and inviolate abideth thy virginity. Neither in entering doth the Word outrage thy womb, nor in going forth therefrom in the flesh shall he rend thy virginity.

Mary said: I fear thee, because of the very pleasingness of the words which thou addressest to me, and thou dost very much astonish me in so speaking to me. Surely thou wouldst not deceive me with words of guile, as my first mother Eve was deceived, who was persuaded by the pleasing and flattering words spoken unto her and in consequence inherited death.

The angel said: O Mary, holy virgin, how many times have I spoken to thee and told thee what is true and assured; and yet thou dost not give ear to my behest and to the oracle of my mouth! And yet I stand before thee, and once more with God's help I address thee. Let not thy heart tremble at the sight of me, nor let thy thoughts waver from the Lord thy God. And remove not thy heart away from my words which I have uttered, but hearken now and learn of me. It is not out of any guile or deceit, nor from chicanery and craft that I came to speak with thee, but to prepare thee beforehand to be his temple and dwelling place.

Mary said: Now at the sound of thy words and thy full converse do I marvel, and my mind is occupied to know what answer to give unto thy saying. And if I cannot satisfy my mind, then to whom shall I relate my matters, or who will believe me, that the things I tell of are [true]?

Tisch. ed. The angel said : O holy inviolate virgin, do not occupy thy mind with such vain fancies.

Mary said : I distrust not thy words, nor is that which thou sayest incredible. Indeed, I rather rejoice and exult in thy message. Yet my soul is affrighted and trembles [at the thought that] in my body I carry God as it were a man, to give him birth, and that after it my virginity abides inviolate. O how marvelous and wonderful is that which thou sayest !

The angel said : How many times have I told thee in many words, and have made thee accurately my witness ; yet hast thou been distrustful of me.

Mary said : I pray thee, servant of the Most High, take not amiss my repeated questions. For thou dost know men's nature, that they are distrustful in all matters. Therefore I desire to ask, that I may know for certain. So do thou not be offended because of what I have said.

The angel said : Thou sayest well, but believe me who have been sent from God to speak with thee and give thee good tidings.

Mary said : Yea, I believe thy words and listen to the oracle thou hast announced to me, that it is really so. But hear of me what I say to thee. Until this day I have kept myself in purity and righteousness before the priests and all the congregation, being allotted unto Joseph to wife. And now am I resolved [to remain] in trust in his house and to preserve myself cautiously, until we shall receive the crown of blessing along with the other virgins and celibates. But if he shall come and see me grown heavy in pregnancy, what answer shall I give or what say unto him ? And if he asks me whence comes my pregnancy, what answer shall I make ?

The angel said : O blessed holy virgin, keep it in silence from thy betrothed, and in thy mind hold fast what I have said, that this result is not of men, and that this thing which I tell thee of comes from none save the Lord, who worketh this for thee. He can save thee from all trial and temptation.

Mary said : If this really be which thou sayest, and if the Lord himself hath been pleased to humble himself unto his handmaid and servant, let it be unto me according to thy word.

And the angel departed from her. And at the same time as he spake the word, and as the holy virgin bowed down, the word God entered into her ear of hearing within ; and the thought of the nature of her flesh was cleansed by efflatus along with all her senses in the twelve members, and was purified like gold in the fire. And she became a temple holy and spotless and a dwelling place of his Godhead. And at the same time began the pregnancy of the holy virgin. For when the angel foretold the event to Mariam, it was in the month of Nisan the fifteenth, which was April the sixth, on the fourth day of the week at the third hour of the day. And that same day the angel of the Lord went direct into the regions of Persia and gave tidings to the magian princes that they should go and worship the new-born child. And they were led by the star for nine months and then came and arrived in time for the birth from the holy virgin. For at that time the kingdom of Persia was powerful, and they were victorious above the other kings who were in the East. And those who were princes of the magi were three brothers ; the first was Melchon,

who was ruler of the Persians; the second, Baltasar, who had *Tisch. ed.* authority over India; and the third, Gaspar, who held the land of Arabia. They, by the command of God, joined together and came for the birth of the holy virgin, and arriving in haste were in time for the birth of Jesus.

But when the holy virgin heard the tidings from the angel she rose and fell on her face and said: O Lord of my spirit and my flesh; thou hast power to do according as may be the will of thy creative love; and even as thou art pleased and hast planned all according to thy good will. Now incline to the prayer of thy servant, and hear me, and save my soul. For thou art God my Saviour, and thy name is called Lord over me forever. And until this day have I kept myself in purity and righteousness and spotlessness unto thee, O Lord my God, to guard my virginity safe and sound without the impurity of any fleshly desire; and now thy desire is fulfilled.

And having said this the virgin Mary rose and thanked the Lord; and after that the holy virgin passed an hour in pondering, and wept and said: What is this new and marvelous thing which has happened unto me, that which has never come to pass in the birth of men until now? And I am become a mark and a reproach to all men and women. And now am I confounded and know not what to do, nor what answer to make to anyone for myself. To whom shall I go, or to whom tell of it? Wherefore did my mother give me birth, and why did my parents ask for me of God unto their sorrow of soul—me that am a reproach to myself and to my parents? Wherefore did they consecrate me to the temple of holiness to keep my virginity? Why was I not erewhile banished by death from the face of the earth? and if I have remained alive, why did my parents not wed me secretly like other daughters of the Hebrews? Ah, who has heard, who seen the matter? who has related it, who will believe that a woman without a man bears a child, a woman who knows not any man? to whom shall I relate this matter and tell it clearly, that in secret . . . ⁸shall give answer, whether to married women or to virgins? whom shall I be able to persuade? If I tell them of this matter, in just manner they will make mock of me? If I speak on oath, then I sin; and for me to say what is false is impossible. And for me to be condemned in my innocence is very harsh. And if they demand testimony of me, there is no one who can justify me. And then if I a second time repeat my story and adhere to it, they will in contempt slay me. And all those who hear my story, far and near, will say that I by false excuses cajole the senseless and silly. So now I know not what to do, nor who will advise me about this matter how to answer all men, and how to tell this to my own husband, for I have been assigned to him by name in marriage. And to the priests and the congregation—how shall I dare to speak before them? And in the market place how shall I excuse myself to men? If I shall tell married women of my virginity, and that without help of man I am pregnant, they will ridicule my report and disbelieve me. How shall I excuse myself for this matter which has happened? But this only do I know about myself that my virginity is pure and my pregnancy certain. For the angel

⁸ A brief lacuna in the Arm. text.

Tisch. ed. of the Lord hath not spoken falsely to me, but truly; and hath not vainly beguiled me, but speaking justly and truly by the Holy Spirit hath told me. So then what shall I now do, since I am become a reproach and loathing among the children of Israel? O marvellous report, O wondrous reality, O fearful thing and awful! I am wholly without knowledge of man, and in my pregnancy, which is invisible, they will not believe; if I assure anyone that in spite of my virginity I am pregnant, they will say to me: Lo, can we believe that thou speakest truly and justly? Tell us how a virgin woman can bear a child without a man's rupturing her virginity. And with these very words they will meet me and put me to scorn. But I know that many will speak unjustly of me and frivolously condemn me in my innocence, but the Lord will save me from the blasphemy and reproaches of men.

XII, 1. And having said this Mary forthwith was silent and she rose and opened the door of her chamber to see if anyone was there and was listening to the words spoken. When she saw no one there, she turned and entered her chamber anew, and taking up the same scarlet and purple, she continued to weave the temple vail which she had previously received from the priests to make. When she had finished the work, she took and gave it to the high priest Zachariah. And as he took it from the hand of the holy virgin, he said to her: My little child, Mary, blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the womb of thy virginity. And the Lord shall magnify thy holy name over all the earth. And thou shalt become chief of women, and among all even mother of virgins. And from thee shall be the salvation of all the earth.

And when the high priest Zachariah had said this, Mary bowed low to the priests and all the congregation, and passed in joy to her house. And when the angel gave the tidings to the virgin Mary was in the pregnancy of Elizabeth on the twelfth of Tisri, on October the ninth. And from then till the fifteenth of Nisan, which is April the sixth, there are 180 days, which is six months. And then it was that the Christ began to be made man incarnate of the holy virgin.

XII, 2. Now one day the holy virgin Mary took it in her head and said: I will rise and go unto my kinsmen, unto Elizabeth, and will tell her all this which has happened unto me, and I will do whatever she shall say to me. So she went out secretly at daybreak and betook herself to the mountain side of Judea to the city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the voice of Mary, the child leapt with joy in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and lifted up her voice and cried out and said: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And wherefore is this for me, that the mother of my Lord should come unto me? For lo, when I heard in my ears the voice of thy greeting, the child leapt in my womb.

And Mary, when she heard this from her, raised her eyes full of tears to heaven and said: Lord, who am I, that all nations bless me; that among all women and daughters of the Hebrews I am become manifest and notable in name and conspicuous among all the tribes of the children of Israel?

XII, 3. And Mary had forgotten the advice which she had earlier heard from the angel. And she remained many days with Elizabeth, and

told her all the tale in order in secret, what she had seen and what heard from the angel. And Elizabeth marveled much and said to her: My child, this is a very wondrous work of God, of which thou tellest. So hearken unto what I shall say to thee. Be not afraid because of this message nor be distrustful, for all the mystery both of act and word is above all intelligence of men. For behold thou dost see me who am grown old and am now come nigh unto death. I have in my old age conceived and bear a child, that before the Lord no word may be impossible. But do thou go quietly unto thy house and tell no one what thou hast seen and heard. Recount it to none of the children of Israel, lest they should in vain conversation divulge it and make mock of us; and thy husband, who is betrothed, lest his heart be wounded by thee and he leave thee; until the will of the Lord be brought to pass and he reveal the action which he plans to perform.

Mariam said: Whatever command thou givest me I will do.

Elizabeth said: Listen to and mark whatever advice I give thee. Go in peace to thy house and come not hither and thither to any place; but sit silently in thy house and keep thyself secret from men, that no one may know. And whatsoever command thy husband hath imposed on thee, do the same, and the Lord according to thy trial will provide an escape. Fear not, and be glad.

And when Elizabeth had spoken, Mary saluted her and went rejoicing to her house. And there she stayed many days and day by day the child grew in her womb. And being afraid of men she continually hid herself that none might know.

CHAPTER VI.—*About the vexation of Joseph and his finding fault with the holy virgin in her innocence and his condemning her.*

And when those days were ended, Joseph came to his house from **XIII, 1.** his work of carpentry, and Mary arose and went out to meet him, and saluted him. Joseph said to her: Art thou well, art thou glad, how hath it been with thee? Mary said: I am well.

And when they had set before themselves a table, they eat and were cheerful, and Joseph lay down upon his bed and desired to rest. And he turned his glance on Mary; and her face changed color and a blush mantled on her cheek and she hid herself from shame, and she could not. And Joseph looked at her in sorrow and rose and sat down and said to her: Thou maiden tell me: Methinks thou hast not the bloom of youth, for I behold a change of a kind in thee. Mary said: And what wouldst thou say about me, who dost ask and enquire all this? Joseph said: I am astonished at thy speaking and thy making of excuses. Why dost thou with changed color on thy face sit idle and sad? Surely no one hath spoken with thee? 'Tis hard for me. Embarrassment and languor have taken hold of thee or else some temptation hath beset thee or some snare on the part of men. Mary said: 'Tis not as thou dost say. Joseph said: Then why dost thou not boldly answer? Said Mary: What dost thou wish me to say to thee?

Joseph said: I believe not thy words, until I shall see. Shew me thy person plainly and boldly before me, if the thing thou sayest is true. And Mary hesitated in her mind and knew not what to do.

Tisch. ed. Then Joseph suddenly sat on his chair, and, scanning her with his eyes this way and that, saw that she was big with child, and raising his voice to a cry he said: O what wicked deed is this thou hast done? And Joseph fell from his chair on his face on the ground, and with his hands he clutched his forehead and beard, and plucked out his white hair and covered his face in the ashes and said: Woe is me, and bitter the disgrace of my old age. What is this that is done, what disaster this that I behold in my house? How shall I look men in the face, or how answer the priests and all the congregation of Israel? And how shall I repel the accusation of guilt? How satisfy the mind of anyone [save] by deceit? What shall I do to her, or what shall I devise about her, whom I received as a virgin holy and spotless from the temple, yet have not been able to preserve according to the tradition of my fathers? If they ask me violently and say: Where is her virgin holiness, bring her spotless and set her before us, — what answer shall I give to all the priests and the congregation? Who was the enemy that has caught me? Who was the robber who took away captive her virginity from me? Who has committed this great wrong in my household; making me a reproach and laughing stock among the children of Israel? Surely the guilt rests not upon me, who through the craft of the serpent have been ejected from my happiness! And having said this Joseph burst into tears and smote himself; and then he again called Mary before him and said to her: Tell me, thou pitiable person, what wicked deed is this which thou hast done? Why hast thou forgotten the Lord thy God who fashioned thee in the womb of thy mother; thou whom thy parents with tears and lamentations sought from God and devoted in holiness and lawfulness to the temple? . . .

NOTE BY THE TRANSLATOR.

It is not necessary to translate this apocryph any further. In the immediate sequel Mary hears an angel say to her: Fear not, for lo, I am with thee to save thee from all thy tribulation.

The gospel of James, of the old Armenian form of which the first few chapters are here translated, is probably a writing of great antiquity. It was known to Gregory of Nyssa and Epiphanius in the last half of the fourth century, to Origen in the middle of the third century, most probably to Clement of Alexandria and Justin Martyr in the second century.

The contents of it are summarized in the headings of the chapters of the Armenian text. These are as follows:

1. The life of the holy virgin Mary in the house of her father. Recited by St. James, brother of the Lord.⁹

⁹ This is more properly the title of the whole book than the heading of the first chapter. For the earlier sections of that chapter along with the special heading are really lost in the Armenian version.

2. About the holy virgin Mary's birth, in her father's house.
3. About the holy virgin Mary's upbringing in the temple of holiness for twelve years.
4. About the holy virgin Mary's being given to Joseph in wedlock according to their legal tradition, that he should keep the virgin with holy care, and about her being intrusted unto the Lord in faith.
5. About the voice of the herald of annunciation which proclaimed to the holy virgin Mary her pregnancy.
6. About the vexation of Joseph and his finding fault with the holy virgin and his condemning her.
7. About Mary's defense of her holy virginity and of Joseph's chastity, and how they both passed the ordeal.
8. About the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ in the cave.
9. About the first mother Eve and Joseph, and how they came in haste and beheld the birth all famous of the holy virgin Mary.
10. About the shepherds who saw the birth of our Lord.
11. About the coming of the magi with gifts to worship the newborn child Jesus.
12. About his being taken into the temple in the city of Jerusalem to be circumcised.
13. About the wickedness of Herod and his slaying the children in Bethlehem.
14. About the repetition of wickedness on Herod's part and how he slew Zacharias because of John, his son.
15. About the angel's revealing to Joseph that he should flee into Egypt.
16. About their departure as fugitives to Qebron that is Qaraq.
17. About his destruction of the idols and demons and pagan priests of Egypt.
18. About their return, by command of the angel, into their land.
19. Their going to Arabia. He destroyed the idols and raised the dead.
20. He came into the land of Canaan and worked wonders in secret and raised the dead.
21. How they reached the land of Israel and caused Jesus to be taught writing.
22. When they came to the city of Arimathea he worked miracles and raised the dead.
23. How they came to the city of Tapari and caused him to be taught dyeing, and of the wonders that there took place.

24. About their coming into the land of Galilee, and what he did with the children of the Israelites and other wonderful acts.

25. How he went up to the village of Emmaus and healed the sick.

26. About the many cures which Jesus wrought in the city and the village, and in other places where Jesus wrought cures.

27. How he fulfilled the traditional writings of the prophets and of the law which he fulfilled.

28. About the judgment which he passed between two soldiers.

Thus the Armenian includes not only the Greek protevangel, which ends with the murder of Zacharias by Herod, but parts as well of the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy, and perhaps of other similar apocryphs. The reader will notice that in the first six chapters which we translate there is considerable expansion of the Greek text. Written on such a scale the Armenian text is of tedious length; and to those who have been brought up to regard the four canonical gospels as works of supreme value in comparison with which all later documents of the church are insignificant, the protevangel in all its forms must seem superfluous. Yet we cannot afford to neglect anything which has once on a time deeply appealed to the human spirit, least of all a work such as this which has had so profound an influence on Christian art and belief. The dogma of the immaculate conception of the mother of Christ which was made a part of the Latin Catholic faith in 1856 really rests on this protevangel, which is the first document of the church to imply that Mary the virgin was herself miraculously conceived. Very just, therefore, are the remarks of Tischendorf in criticising Thilo who first edited the Latin recension of the protevangel called the gospel of Pseudo-Matthew. For he writes thus: "*nimirum fabularum amplificatio, quam Thilo iure questus est, non probanda gustu nostro, sed minime contemnenda est propterea quod pertinet ad cognoscendum ingenium temporum eorum quibus debetur atque placuit.*"

The Armenian version here rendered seems to be made from an older Syriac text which was in the hands of Ephrem Syrus, the great fourth-century doctor of Edessa. That this is so is clear from a comparison with it of Ephrem's sermon on the birth of Christ, of which I translate by way of example the following from an old Armenian version, in which alone, so far as I know, it is preserved:¹⁰

"The command went forth from the Great King and thereupon the

¹⁰ See *St. Ephreми opera Armenice*, Venice, 1836, Vol. IV, p. 19.

Son of the King entered by the portals of her ears. When the virgin said to the angel, 'Lo, here am I, the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word,' he gave the word and she received the Child into her bosom. 'Tis not, as some say, that before the angel came it went down into the virgin; though, if it had been so, it were no wonder. But it was needful first that the tidings should be given to the virgin and that she in good will and holy freedom should accept him. There was nothing specially glorious to God in the angel's coming first; what was to be praised was that his advent was made in humility. Just as Moses announced to the people that the Most High shall descend, and when the elders and Moses were purified, then the Most High came down on Mount Sinai, even so Gabriel brought the tidings; and she was purified by the Holy Spirit and became a temple for God to dwell in. The effulgent splendor flashed out into Mary, yet was not divided from the essence of the Father."

In the commentary on the *Diatessaron* there are further traces that Ephrem used a form of the protevangel very similar to the Armenian. The question arises whether the incident of the conception through the ear originally had a place in the protevangel. The Greek entirely omits it, but the gnostic character of the addition would account for its doing so. The same story recurs in several Greek documents; for example, among the doubtful works of Athanasius in the *Questiones Aliæ* (printed in Migne, *Patrol. Graeca*, Tome 28, Col. 789) we have the following passage: "Hear another mystery. As a house shut in on all sides, but which has towards the east a window of pure and thin glass, admits the sun's rays to penetrate and light up the whole of its inside; and just as the sun in passing through and his rays in going out again do not break the glass, which remains unhurt by their impact as they pass in and out—so must you understand as touching the virgin Mary. For she was quite chaste, like a house shut up all round; yet the Son and Word of God descended like a divine ray from the Sun of Justice, the Father, and entered in through the little glass window of her ears, and lighted up her most holy abode. And after that he went out again as he knows how to do, without her virginity having been in the least impaired. But as before the birth, so during the birth and after the birth he preserved the chastity of the virgin."

The same idea recurs in another spurious homily of Athanasius in the same volume of Migne, col. 969 D, where we read that "God entered through the virgin's ears as he liked." This homily is, perhaps, the work of Chrysostom. The same thought is nowhere more

clearly expressed than in a homily of Theodotus, bishop of Ancyra, *c.* A. D. 430 (Migne, *Patrol. Gr.*, Tome 77, Col. 1392). Here we read that "Mary the prophetess conceived through her hearing the living God. For the hearing is the natural channel for words to pass through" (*φυσικὴ δίοδος τῶν λόγων ἡ ἀκοή*). Where we may render by "hearing" or by "ear" as we like. The idea, already entertained by Tertullian and Origen, is in close relation with the docetic belief of many of the earliest Christians that the body of Christ was phantasmal or akin to ether in its composition, a mahatma in fact.

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